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Hurd, (Sir) Archibald Spicer
Murder at sea

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MURDER AT SEA.

BY

ARCHIBALD HURD,

Author of "Command of the Sea," "Naval Efficiency," etc.

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THE CHILDREN OF THE "LUSITANIA."

"WE DO NOT WANT ANY LOVE AMONG THE AMERICANS, BUT WE DO WANT RESPECT, AND THE CASE OF THE 'LUSITANIA' WILL WIN IT FOR US BETTER THAN A HUNDRED VICTORIES ON LAND."—*BERLIN LOKALANZEIGER, 9 MAY, 1915.*

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MURDER AT SEA.

It was a large hall in a great seaport town. At the sides and up and down the middle lay rows of shrouded objects with narrow passages opening between them. The blinds of the long windows had been drawn; the light was dim. From time to time men appeared at one or other of the doors, bearing other objects, which they laid reverently on the floor. No word was spoken, but now and again whispers suggested that orders were being given as to where the objects should be placed. Along the aisles running up and down the hall two old seamen, bent with years, moved without noise; here and there were little groups of people, men and women in the distress of overwhelming sorrow. A shroud would be raised and a hasty, furtive, shrinking glance taken at the features of a man or woman, wax-like and immobile. Or again a covering would be lifted to reveal the innocence of childhood—little hands empty and idle, little feet never again to chase illusive shadows, dancing eyes never again to sparkle, soft downy

hair damp with the sea water which still stood in beads on baby faces no more to light up with heaven-sent smiles at the coming of father or mother, or break into ripples of welcome to some new toy, teddy bear or doll.

About thirty little children had been laid out, their bodies cold and still. Near by were scores of silent women, beautiful with the beauty of death, and in other parts of the hall strong men slept the last sleep. The hall had been transformed into a sepulchre of death. A sudden emergency had made the change necessary. News had come to the town that a splendid ship had sunk and that bodies were being brought ashore. Very soon the townspeople had everything prepared for the reception of their dumb, unresponsive guests. Those quiet figures walking quietly up and down, I was told, were men and women searching for their loved ones—husbands looking for wives and wives for husbands, sisters for brothers and brothers for sisters, mothers endeavouring through their tears to recognise in one or other of the silent forms little boy or girl whose merry laughter would never again bring sunshine into their lives.

"It's a bad business, this," one of the old sailors—a well-spoken man—said to me, as a

grief-stricken mother bent to kiss the cold brow of her newly-found child, whose body had been taken from the sea a few hours before. "About a thousand others have gone, they say. These are only some of those whose bodies have been rescued. Scores upon scores of others went down in the ship and are now lying dead in their steel prison, mocked, as a gentleman said to me just now, by the very comforts of state-room and cabin—children and women as well as men. Have you travelled in foreign parts, Sir—Spain, Portugal, France or Italy? I have often stood before the pictures of the Mother and the Child and thought, well, if there is nothing in Christianity, as some people say, it is a fine thing that men were taught to treat women tenderly and to regard children as though—well, as though they were visitors from heaven. And now I shall never forget that hundreds of defenceless women and scores of children have gone down in this ship, not by accident, mind, but as the result of a deliberate act, carefully planned. Somewhere in the Bible —and I often used to read it at sea—it is said, 'It were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck and he cast into the sea than that he should offend one of these little ones.' Offend! Why, those poor little things

lying there so quiet have been murdered—wickedly murdered. And why?" Then came the story of a crime without its parallel in all the long records of the human race, for never before in so short a period had so many human beings been done to death on the high seas by the act of one small group of men.

About two thousand human beings were on board the great ship "Lusitania" when she put out from New York on her passage across the Atlantic. The vessel was one of the finest riding the seas, a ship which had cost a million sterling to build. *Her passengers included men and women of every degree and of many nationalities—nearly two hundred Americans, Greeks, Dutch, Swiss, Mexicans, Russians, French, Italians and British; there were many children.* Before the vessel sailed a statement was published warning passengers that she would be attacked by German submarines. Though the announcement was supposed to come from the German Embassy in Washington, no one regarded it seriously. America being a neutral state, the German Ambassador, it was confidently assumed, would not dare to declare such a policy of murder; it would be an insult to the American people. Moreover, the passengers assured themselves, in this twentieth

century of the Christian era, it was impossible to believe that there existed men in high places who would fashion—or other men (though under authority) who would execute—such a policy of cold-blooded murder on a wholesale scale. Such an act would cause the whole world to rise and determine upon vengeance, swift and overwhelming. Every one on board the great ship was confident that, threat or no threat, they were protected not less by the universally accepted law of nations, than by the dictates of common humanity which even the pirates of the long dead past respected. The threat was dismissed as either the clumsy invention of some enemy of Germany, anxious to blacken her in the eyes of the world, or as an effort on the part of some war-maddened and irresponsible Germans to frighten women and children and thus bring the American people to a realisation of what the policy of "frightfulness" might mean to them if pursued to its ultimate limit. Of all the hundreds of passengers who had booked their passages—men and women of many nationalities—none abandoned their plans. *Events proved that the warning had come from the German Government; its agents enjoying American hospitality —protected by the United States Navy and*

Army and the laws of the Republic—had been directed to advertise the coming murder of Americans and others.

The ship sailed as though no dastardly threat had been issued. Neither passengers nor crew entertained any doubts as to their safety, though they had no means of defence. They placed their reliance—rich men like Mr. Alfred Vanderbilt and poor men in the steerage—on the laws of God and of man. They were convinced of their safety, furthermore, because the ship was not leaving Europe, but was on her way to Europe, and there could, therefore, be no suspicion, though she flew the British flag, that she was carrying troops. In any case, it was argued, the worst that could happen, if troops or munitions were discovered on board, would be that the Germans, if they intercepted the ship, would take the soldiers prisoners and throw any munitions overboard. As there was neither the one or the other, apart from 5,000 cartridge cases, and the vessel was merely a passenger ship making a peaceful voyage, there could be no danger.*

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*The ship was inspected by officials of the United States Government before sailing and they satisfied themselves that she had no guns, mounted or unmounted, on board, and that she carried no war material.

All went well on the passage across the Atlantic and the ship drew in towards the Irish coast. Some of the passengers had just finished their lunch and others were still seated in the great saloons when the Captain, standing on the port side of the lower bridge, heard the cry, "There's a torpedo coming, Sir." Determined to prepare for the worst, Captain Turner, a veteran seaman of over thirty years' experience, had already ordered every possible bulkhead to be closed, as well as the portholes, and the lifeboats had been swung out. The ship was travelling at eighteen knots. The weather was clear, and the sea smooth when the first torpedo was seen approaching. There was no vessel of any kind within view; no challenge to stop was given; no warning was made. While still submerged, the German submarine fired a torpedo, though her commander knew that it might mean death to two thousand human beings.

The great ship was struck on the starboard side between the third and fourth funnels, and one of the lifeboats, in which the hopes of those on board resided, was instantly reduced to splinters. A great gaping hole was made in the hull of the vessel. Immediately afterwards a second torpedo delivered its shattering blow. The German submarine officer was evidently

determined that none on board should escape. Both these torpedoes hit the ship on the starboard side, tearing great cavities in the hull. Then another torpedo, coming from the port side and discharged from another submarine, sped towards the crippled mammoth at a speed of forty miles an hour. Though released at a distance of not more than five hundred yards, it failed to hit the hull.

But already the ship was doomed. The water rushed into the engine rooms putting the engines out of commission, and the captain's order to head towards the land could not be carried out. Frantic signals by wireless were sent out over the desolate waste of waters—once, twice, thrice repeated. They were acknowledged, but the replies came from a long distance, and it was realised that help could not arrive in time. Then the dynamo supplying the current to the wireless installation gave out. The Germans had done their work. The ship had already taken a heavy list to starboard. *In less than twenty minutes she sank in deep water, taking with her to their nameless graves eleven hundred and ninety-eight defenceless men, weak women and innocent little children.*

No words can convey a picture of the scenes

enacted on the great liner after the two fatal assassin blows had been struck. It was a British ship with a large number of Americans on board. The Captain's cry, "Women and children first," raised as the vessel heeled over, was instantly obeyed in the chivalrous spirit which makes men of all civilised races heroic when danger confronts them and women and children have to be saved. There were many heroes that day on board the "Lusitania"; among them stands out the figure of Alfred Vanderbilt, the American millionaire, whom Englishmen, Frenchmen and others had learnt to love as a sportsman who always thought and acted straight. When the ship was sinking his valet, Ronald Denyer, was by his side. A few days later a Canadian lady, Mrs. Lines, told the story of how these two men—master and valet—acted when they realised that either they must play the coward's part or sink in the great ship.

"People will not talk of Mr. Vanderbilt in future as the millionaire sportsman and man of pleasure," this Canadian lady declared; "he will be remembered as 'the children's hero.' Men and women will salute his name. When death was nearing him, he showed a gallantry which no words of mine can adequately describe.

He stood outside the palm saloon, on the starboard side, with Ronald Denyer by his side. He looked round on the scene of horror and despair with pitying eyes. 'Find all the kiddies you can, boy,' he said to his valet. The man rushed off immediately to collect the children, and as he brought them to Mr. Vanderbilt, the millionaire dashed to the boats with two little ones in his arms at a time. When he could no longer find any more children, he went to the assistance of the women, and placed as many as he could in safety. In all his work he was gallantly assisted by Ronald Denyer, and the two continued their efforts to the very end." Mr. Vanderbilt was a conspicuous passenger, and hence his record has been preserved. He was not the only hero who gave up hope of life in order that women and children might be saved. As the huge ship went under and the water became black with men and women struggling for life and with little children, full of terror but hardly realising the terrible fate before them, many men, British, American, or otherwise, courted death in the very effort to rescue others. The destruction of the "Lusitania" was a crime without parallel in human history, but it has left behind memories which may well be a glorious heritage to those who, in beating

along life's highway, have not abandoned those heroic, though simple, traits of character which distinguish men from beasts.

The news of the loss of the "Lusitania" and the assassination of these hundreds of defenceless people struck a note of horror throughout the civilised world. Men clenched their teeth and swore that such a crime should be fully punished; women's eyes in every continent were dimmed with tears as they pictured the drowning babies on the broad bosom of the Atlantic and remembered their mothers. The conscience of the world was still very tender. Engineers tell us that as train after train, week after week, rolls over the steel rails of the permanent way, the metal gradually loses its character—it becomes dead. The conscience of the world is in process of becoming atrophied as horror succeeds horror. Many months have passed since the "Lusitania" went down; Germany is still unpunished. The passage of time has in no way lessened the character of the crime, but throughout the world men and women have become, almost imperceptibly perhaps, immune from the sharp sense of personal grief and horror which came to them in the early days of the war.

We have almost forgotten the sensations

which this great crime created when first the news spread. The world suddenly awoke to realise that humanity was divided into two camps—the one consisting of men and women with hearts to bleed for sufferers, the other recognising no law except "military necessity." Let us recall the voices which came from these two camps. What did decent men throughout the world think and say?

"This represents not merely piracy, but piracy on a vaster scale of murder than any old-time pirate ever practised."—*Mr. Roosevelt.*

"This act is opposed to every law and every sentiment of humanity, and we raise our voice, however powerless it may be, in protest. A sea-faring people which has any self-respect does not make a war of annihilation against defenceless people."— *Handelsblad (Amsterdam).*

"The commander of the German submarine who performed this work can look with pride upon it. Is it not so, Satan?"—*Tijd (Amsterdam).*

"This is an unpardonable crime against humanity. It is difficult to understand how an officer of the German Navy could consent to perform such an act."—*Nya Dagligt Allehanda (Stockholm).*

"Whenever in future the Germans venture to speak of their culture the answer will be 'It does not exist. It committed suicide on May 7th, 1915.'"—*Vort Land* (*Copenhagen*).

"The mad and reckless action of the German submarine has now reached its culminating point. The whole world looks with horror and detestation on the event."—*Aftenposten* (*Norway*).

"There is a limit dividing like an abyss the soldier and the scoundrel; Germany crossed it yesterday."—*Idea Nazionale* (*Italy*).

"This is one of the most atrocious episodes of this horrible war. One cannot understand how the sinking of the 'Lusitania' can profit Germany. Great Britain has lost a liner; Germany has assumed the responsibility for the painful impression caused thereby."—*Giornale d'Italia*.

"The sinking of the 'Lusitania' with its heavy freightage of peaceful travellers, including hundreds of women and children, was not an act of war; it was a deed of wholesale murder. All considerations of the laws of war have vanished in face of so great a catastrophe, which violates all laws of common humanity."—*New York American*.

"Even in the days of piracy maritime history

never recorded crimes of such a character. Germany has exceeded the limits of cruelty and barbarity. We believe that humanity will not contemplate such abominations impassively." —*Liberal* (*Spain*).

"Only the spontaneous and collective protest of the whole civilised world, outside the pale of which Germany has placed herself, can be the answer of all right-minded people to this new challenge by this brutal country."—*Telegraaf* (*Amsterdam*).

How was the news received in Germany—that other camp? It was welcomed with shameless demonstrations of glee. While British and Irish sailors out on the Atlantic, with sad hearts, were gathering in the bodies of the men, women, and children who had been slain, "hundreds of telegrams," a Berlin message stated, "have been sent to Admiral von Tirpitz congratulating him." From New York came a message that "Riotous scenes of jubilation took place amongst Germans in the German clubs and restaurants," it being added that "many Germans got drunk in toasting 'Der Tag.'" The Press of Germany and Austria applauded the achievement as an exhibition of German virility and ruthlessness. This war on women and babies filled

these newspapers with satisfaction unbounded.

"The sinking of the 'Lusitania' is a success for our submarines which must be placed besides the greatest achievements in this naval war. . . . The sinking of the great British steamer is a success the moral significance of which is still greater than the material success. With joyful pride we contemplate this latest deed of our Navy, and it will not be the last." —*Kölnische Volkszeitung, May 10th, 1915.*

"The news will be received by the German people with unanimous satisfaction, since it proves to England and the whole world that Germany is quite in earnest in regard to her submarine warfare."—*Cologne Gazette, May 15th, 1915.*

"We rejoice over this new success of the German Navy."—*Neue Freie Presse, May 15th, 1915.*

The city of Magdeburg distinguished itself by proposing to honour the actual murderers. From that place, on May 19th, came the news that a committee had been formed for the purpose of collecting money as a national gift for the officers and crew of the submarine which sent the 'Lusitania' to the bottom and slaughtered so many defenceless men, women and children of many nations.

Within a few days the American Government had sent to the authorities at Berlin a Note of protest. Its terms may be recalled if only as a reminder of the official view which was taken by a neutral nation of an event which had robbed over a hundred Americans of their lives. Reference was first made to the sinking of the passenger steamer "Falaba" by a German submarine on March 28th, through which Mr. Léon C. Thrasher, an American citizen, was drowned. The ship was attacked without warning, and, even after the terrified women and children had scrambled into the boats, the Germans continued to rain shots on them from quick-firing guns. The American Note also referred to the attack on the American vessel "Cushing" by a German aeroplane and the torpedoing of the American vessel "Gulflight" by a German submarine, "as a result of which two or more Americans met their death"; and then attention was called to the unparallelled circumstances of cruelty, amounting to wholesale murder, in which the "Lusitania" was sunk. The American Government recited the law of nations and the dictates of humanity which hitherto had been the foundation of that "sacred freedom of the seas" which all nations in the past had combined to maintain.

"It does not understand the Imperial German Government to question those rights, but assumes, on the contrary, that the Imperial Government accept as a matter of course the rule that the lives of non-combatants, whether they be of neutral citizenship or citizens of the nations at war, cannot lawfully or rightfully be put in jeopardy by the capture or destruction of unarmed merchantmen, and recognise also, as all other nations do, the obligation to take the usual precaution of visit and search to ascertain whether a suspected merchantman is in fact of belligerent nationality or is in fact carrying contraband under a neutral flag.

"The Government of the United States . . . desires to call the attention of the Imperial German Government with the utmost earnestness to the fact that the objection to their present method of attack against the trade of their enemies lies in the practical impossibility of employing submarines in the destruction of commerce without disregarding those rules of fairness, reason, justice, and humanity which all modern opinion regards as imperative. It is practically impossible for officers of submarines to visit a merchantman at sea and examine her papers and cargo. It is practically impossible for them to make a prize of her, and

if they cannot put a prize crew on board they cannot sink her without leaving her crew and all on board to the mercy of the sea in her small boats.

"These facts, it is understood, the Imperial German Government frankly admits. We are informed that, in the instances of which we have spoken, time enough for even that poor measure of safety was not given, and in the last two of the cases cited not so much as a warning was received. Manifestly, submarines cannot be used against merchantmen, as the last few weeks have shown, without an inevitable violation of many sacred principles of justice and humanity. American citizens act within their indisputable rights in taking their ships and in travelling wherever their legitimate business calls them upon the high seas, and exercise the rights in what should be a well-justified confidence that their lives will not be endangered by acts done in clear violation of universally acknowledged international obligations, and certainly in the confidence that their own Government will sustain them in the exercise of their rights."

Finally the American Note referred in scathing terms to the "formal warning purporting to come from the Imperial Embassy at Washing-

ton," and added that "No warning that an unlawful and inhumane act will be committed can possibly be accepted as an excuse or palliation for that act or as an abatement for the responsibility of its commission."

'The horror with which civilised people received the news of the murder of nearly twelve hundred men, women and children who were travelling by the "Lusitania" and the stern terms of the American Note had no effect on German policy. Under the horrified gaze of the world, the slaughter of non-combatants continued without mercy and without regret, as also without fear, apparently, of any action which neutral nations might take. Below are cited the outstanding crimes of this campaign during subsequent months of 1915:—

		Lives lost.
June 28, 1915 ...	Armenian (British) ...	30
August 19, 1915	Arabic (British)	30
Sept. 4, 1915 ...	Hesperian (British) ...	32
Nov. 7, 1915 ...	Ancona (Italian)	208
Dec. 24, 1915 ...	Ville de Ciotat (French) ...	80
Dec. 30, 1915 ...	Persia (British)	385

The "Arabic," like the "Lusitania," was a great liner carrying passengers. She also was struck down without warning by a German submarine when outward bound from Liverpool to New York, in charge of Captain Finch. There

were many children and many women on board the Arabic, as the Germans well knew. In ten minutes the "Arabic" had disappeared. The discipline of passengers and crew was magnificent. In that short period almost all on board were transferred to the boats. Fortunately, unlike the "Lusitania," the "Arabic" kept on an even keel, and the work of rescue by the heroic officers and men of the ship, assisted by the male passengers, was greatly facilitated. A graphic picture of the last terrible scene was given by Mr. Kenneth Douglas, of London, an actor :—

"I was in my cabin, and was in pyjamas when I heard the cry that a steamer was being torpedoed. Whether it was the 'Arabic' or another ship attacked by a German foe I did not know. But I hastened to dress myself and rushed on deck to see the British steamship 'Dunsley' in trouble. After the torpedo had penetrated her hull, a loud explosion followed. I naturally thought that the next steamer the German submarine would attack would be the White Star liner I was on, and my premonition proved only too true.

"The tramp liner succumbed to the torpedo and had disappeared with a plunge in the ocean. Within a very short time the lifeboats

were quickly launched, as were also the life-saving rafts, and were floating in the water. The 'Arabic' was then struck, without any warning whatever being given. She was hit on the port side with a torpedo, and a similar explosion to that on the 'Dunsley' followed It was a deafening sound and thrilling in the extreme, and made all the passengers considerably alarmed. But there was no time to think of the seriousness of the situation. Life was at stake, and no one knew what to do to save it.

"Excitement reigned. There was a bit of a swell on that made it difficult to get into the boats as they were bobbing up and down. However, I got into one, where I had an opportunity of seeing the "Arabic" take her final dip in the ocean. She caused a great suction, and the water turned it into whirlpools, which drew the various lifeboats and rafts into it and twisted them round and round, and made one think they were finally going to be submerged and sent to the bottom.

"I saw several women, men, and children in the water struggling for their lives. Our boat proceeded towards two men in the water who had life-saving apparatus on. We rescued them by dragging them into the boat."

For a fleeting moment the submarine which had dealt the fatal blow at the "Arabic" was seen and then she disappeared, officers and men caring nothing for the human agony on which they turned their backs. One incident in particular may be recalled as an illustration of the way in which sailors can face death. The third engineer, an officer named London, though he knew his end was at hand, stood by his engines unshrinkingly in order that all orders from the bridge might be carried out to the very last. An electrician, named Burns, was faithful to the end, performing his duties courageously and unflinchingly. These two men and others remained at their posts to the last, and gave up their lives in order that others might be saved.

In the case of the "Hesperian" the death roll was comparatively small, as in that of the "Arabic," but no gratitude is due to the Germans on that account—the intention was to commit acts of wholesale murder. The attempt to consign to the pitiless ocean the six hundred people who were travelling in the "Hesperian" was aggravated by the fact that a week before Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador at Washington, had, in the name of his Government, given to Mr. Lansing, the American Secretary of State, a promise that "*passenger liners*

will not be sunk without warning and without ensuring the safety of the non-combatants aboard, provided that the liner do not try to escape or offer resistance." The pledge had hardly been made before it was violated. The "Hesperian" received no warning. She did not try to escape; she did not offer resistance. Without mercy, the submarine struck her down bringing over six hundred human beings face to face with death in the most terrible form.

The campaign of murder on the High Seas, which had been undertaken against British and French ships, was afterwards extended to the Italian mercantile marine. The passenger liner "Ancona," outward bound from Naples to New York with over five hundred passengers and crew—the former mostly emigrants and including many children, was sunk in the Mediterranean by a torpedo fired by a submarine flying the Austrian flag, but believed to be manned, in part, by Germans. In this instance the submarine carried more powerful guns than other submarines which had been active, and when yet afar off brought the ship under a heavy bombardment, killing and injuring passengers. Then, without pause, although the "Ancona" stopped, a torpedo was fired hitting the ship in a vulnerable spot. Amid the piteous screaming

of women and the heartrending panic of the children, the captain and his officers endeavoured to transfer their human freight to the boats. While this work of mercy was still in progress, the submarine continued the deadly onslaught from her guns, pouring shot after shot on the ship and on the boats with callous indifference. The only explanation from Vienna of this murderous outrage which closed in death the eyes of over two hundred men, women and children was that the "Ancona" "had tried to escape." This was the excuse made in an Austrian official communiqué. The real facts, ascertained after the fullest enquiry, were set forth by the Italian Government.

"The Austrian communique is false in its fundamental facts. All the survivors of the 'Ancona' testify that the submarine made no signal whatsoever to bring the ship to a stop, nor did it even fire a blank warning shot. This armed aggression took place without any preliminary warning.

"The 'Ancona' was bound for New York, and could not have been carrying either such passengers or cargo as could justify capture, and, therefore, she had no reason for attempting to avoid examination. Moreover, it is a false and malicious assertion to state that the loss of

so many human lives was due to the conduct of the crew. On the contrary, the bombardment by the submarine continued after the 'Ancona' had stopped, and was also directed against the boats filled with people, thereby causing numerous victims."

One of the third-class passengers of the "Ancona" who escaped by a miracle has described the scenes of suffering and agony which the crew of the submarine witnessed without one pang of regret.

"Exactly at one o'clock on Monday afternoon we sighted a submarine at a great distance. She came up to the surface and made full speed in our direction, firing as she did so a shot which went wide across our bows. We took this to be a warning to stop; immediately there was the wildest panic on board, not only among the women and children, but among the men too. The former screamed piteously, and the frightened children clung desperately to their mothers."

"Meantime," he continued, "the submarine continued to shell us, while gaining rapidly upon us. After the fifth shot the chart-house was partly carried away, and another shot completely destroyed it. The engines then ceased going and the 'Ancona' was at a standstill.

The submarine, which we could now see dimly, was Austrian. She came alongside, and then we heard the commander talking to the captain of the 'Ancona.' In a somewhat curt manner we were told that the Austrian commander had given a few minutes' time for the passengers and crew to abandon the ship. Then the submarine withdrew to a little distance.

"No time was lost in making the necessary arrangements, but soon there ensued a regular pandemonium. All the passengers, women and men, big and little, appeared to have completely lost their heads. The submarine continued to fire around the vessel. There was a rush for the boats, which were being lowered. The passengers got into the boats, but in the confusion many of them were not altogether free from the davits and were overturned by their heavy load, the occupants being thrown into the water.

"Many struggled before our eyes until they were drowned. The shrieks of the women and children rent the air, but no help it appeared could be given. . . . During this indescribable and heartrending scene the submarine continued to discharge shot after shot. Such ruthless conduct was all the more incomprehensible as not one shot was directed at the ship itself, the

assailants firing all round the vessel as if to create as much terror as possible."

The assassination of the passengers on board the "Ancona" was followed by the destruction of the "Ville de Ciotat," and then, as the year 1915 was drawing to its close, the world was shocked by the news of the destruction of the British liner "Persia." Three hundred and eighty-five human beings were offered up as a sacrifice to the modern Moloch. The ship was bound from London to Bombay, and when off the Island of Crete she was torpedoed. There were five hundred and fifty people on board, including nearly a score of Americans. Between the fatal blow and the sinking of the ship five minutes only elapsed in which to make hurried preparation for the safety of passengers and crew. The majority of those on board were women and children.

By the merciful intervention of Providence, or other cause beyond human comprehension, nearly two hundred passengers, after indescribable experiences in small boats—"places of safety!"—at last reached land. Not one of them but will carry to the grave indelible memories of the last scene, as the great ship plunged beneath the water. They will never forget the cries of anguish of the women; they will always remember when they see a child

playing unconscious of danger, confiding in the protection of father or mother, the fate of the little children of the "Persia" who, in those last moments, found that their simple faith had no substance.

Such are a few incidents in the campaign of murderous piracy conducted on the high seas with an inhumanity without its parallel in the world's annals. There were pirates in the past, outlaws who committed incidental murders in pursuit of their policy of robbery. The destruction of life was trivial. They seldom killed merely for the sake of killing; the most callous destroyed a few men here and there, in order to remove witnesses who might tell tales of their villainy. Whatever the nationality of these pirates, all the law-abiding nations of the world conspired to punish them with the direst punishment known to men. German piracy is in a class alone and apart. No precedent can be found for it. Never before by the deliberate act of a small body of men have twelve hundred people, defenceless on the high seas, been sent to their death in a matter of a few minutes; that constitutes Germany's record. It has never been equalled, and who can doubt that, except by Germany, it will never be approached by any nation, however much its passions may be

roused by the fierce pursuit of war? The German campaign shows to the world the Prussian spirit in its maritime manifestation, and unhappily Austria's future is indelibly condemned by the same mark of Cain. *As the years roll on is the world to forget those little children and defenceless women, to say nothing of the non-combatant men, who lie at the bottom of the restless sea, dumb memorials to this twentieth century outburst of something more than barbaric brutality?*

Mark the conditions under which all these murders have been committed! The only excuse which the Germans and Austrians can advance is that they are exercising "the rights under prize law" of attacking their opponents' commerce. What is prize law? It consists in the right of a belligerent to take property from an enemy and sequester it for his own use. The very word "prize" indicates the character of this right. Before the war the routine recognised by civilised States was that a merchant ship might be captured and taken into a convenient port, there to be adjudicated upon by a prize court. It was admitted that the non-combatants, passengers and crew, should not be injured, much less killed. In exceptional circumstances the man-of-war, after visiting

the ship and examining her papers, in order to ascertain beyond doubt her nationality and character, might sink her if there was no port to which she could be taken. But, in that event, every precaution, it was declared, had to be taken to remove passengers and crew to "a place of safety." Is a small boat cast adrift on the face of stormy waters and shelled by enemy guns a place of safety? Throughout the war Germany and Austria have infringed the laws of nations and have outraged the dictates of humanity. They have slaughtered unarmed men, including men of neutral nationalities, delicately nurtured women, and tiny children.

The submarine is mistakenly regarded by some people as a small, frail craft of comparatively recent invention. It is nothing of the kind. Over a hundred years ago an American engineer named Fulton, a mechanical genius, built a submarine boat. Nelson had heard of submarines. The earlier vessels constructed to travel under water were impracticable instruments of war, because for many years it was difficult to provide suitable means of locomotion. The coming of the motor engine solved the problem, which had already been simplified by the discovery of electricity. The submarine as a practicable and destructive agent of war was

developed not by the Germans, but by the French and the Americans. It was the Germans, however, who pressed the submarine boat into their service in order to enable them to commit acts of villainy and murder of a character and on a scale which excel any demoniacal scheme which ever entered the brain of a drink-soddened pirate of the past—a very outlaw among men.

But the condemnation of Germany does not end there. *Before the war opened, submarines were building as large as many ships which Germany has always described as cruisers.* By immemorial custom, there are limits to the action which a cruiser may take in warring against an enemy's commerce. On approaching a merchant ship she must fire two blank shots across the bows as a warning to stop. If these produce no result, she may discharge a live shot not at, but across, the bow of, the vessel. If this fails, then the merchant ship must accept the risk, but these preliminaries seldom failed in past wars, and the world was spared such tragedies as have been of frequent occurrence during this War, without excuse or justification. When the merchant vessel has stopped, the commander of the cruiser must send a boarding party, the papers must be ex-

amined, the captain questioned, and then, in accordance with the rules sanctified by time and the promptings of mercy towards those who are defenceless, every possible measure must be taken to provide for the comfort and safety of passengers and crew. That is the routine of the sea.

The modern submarine is a cruiser. She displaces from 1,000 to 2,000 tons of water; she carries as her main armament tubes from which she can discharge torpedos with from two to three hundred pounds of explosive material. She also mounts guns. Some of the German submarines carry more powerful weapons than were mounted in the frigates which took part in the American Revolutionary war, and they are far more powerful than the average armament of the privateers which periodically swept the seas in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many German submarines are also armoured as a protection against gunfire. Over and above all, *the submarine has offensive and defensive powers which no frigate or cruiser ever possessed.* She can submerge herself in order to approach unseen a defenceless merchant ship, and she can also adopt these tactics to avoid attack if a more powerful man-of-war of enemy character

comes on the scene. *The submarine is a cruiser with powers of attack and defence greater than an ordinary cruiser.** But her hull is devoted largely to her engines—the surface engines and the engines for use when submerged—and to the storage of torpedoes and shells for the guns. Can it be pleaded, because the Germans, to obtain high speed and offensive power, fill the space in the hull with engines, torpedoes, and other equipment for war that, therefore, they can make that an excuse for not attempting to save the lives of those who are travelling by ships which they attack without warning and with callous disregard of every human feeling? If humanity admits that claim, then whenever two nations are at war in years to come the seas will be unsafe for peaceful travel by neutrals, *for the submarine has come to stay.* These craft will increase in size, power and speed.

Contrast with the record of the British Fleet these manifestations of hideous cruelty, revealed in the course of the only maritime operations of the second greatest naval Power in the world since her cruisers were driven off the seas and the main fleet imprisoned in a ring of

* A cruiser, it may be added, is armed with torpedoes similar to those carried by submarines as well as by guns.

steel! The Germans began hostilities by sowing mines, contrary to the law of nations, in the pathways of innocent commerce—belligerent or neutral was no matter; the British responded by organising a vast service for the dangerous work of destroying these destructive agents, with the result that hundreds of brave British lives have been spent in protecting the mercantile sailors of the world from the lurking perils. That policy of outrage by mechanical mines the Germans have continued with a mounting record of slaughter of defenceless seamen and fishermen of almost every State. Further light on the methods of the two services was shed by an incident in the North Sea. Three British cruisers had been sunk by a Germen submarine—using a neutral flag as "cover." A number of the seamen succeeded in getting on a raft and some British sailors in another ship attempted to rescue them. A German submarine, on successive occasions, drove off the rescuers and the unhappy men perished! When the British cruisers "Good Hope" and "Monmouth" sank, the Germans made no effort to rescue a single officer or man of the two crews! Admiral and boy—all perished! Imagine the callous inhumanity of men who could stand by unmoved

and see hundreds of sailors perish for want of a helping hand.

And then mark the contrast! A brush between destroyers occurred in the North Sea in which the Germans were worsted, two destroyers being sunk. In some pride—for the divergence of practice of British and German sailors was then already becoming marked—the Admiralty announced :—

"After the destroyer action on Saturday afternoon strenuous efforts were made to rescue the German sailors, Lieutenant Hartnoll going into the water himself to save a German. In consequence two officers and forty-four men, out of a total of fifty-nine, were picked up. The German prisoners stated that they had sunk a British trawler before being sighted by the 'Laforey' (the British destroyer), and that they picked up a 'two striped officer'—*i.e.*, a lieutenant—and two men. When asked what had become of them, they stated that their prisoners were below and time was short. It must, therefore, be concluded that the officer and two men have perished."

That story furnishes another picture of the inhuman methods of the Navy of the nouveau riche nation of the world, which, in its mad career for power and wealth, has not had time

or inclination to learn what humanity and mercy mean! The Germans in the early months of the War, in short, made it a practice to take no prisoners and to make no effort to save from drowning poor men struggling for their life in the water. "Let them drown!" was, in effect, the German declaration of policy.

On the other hand, not a man-of-war flying the German flag has been destroyed in honourable warfare by the British Navy but endeavours have been made to save life. In the North Sea, in the English Channel, in the Far East, off the Falkland Islands, German sailors, including the son of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz and Captain von Müller, of the Cruiser "Emden," have been saved. German naval prisoners by thousands are at this moment being treated with consideration, and even indulgence, in the British Isles—all of them having been rescued from drowning. These officers and men bear testimony by their very lives that the British Navy is still faithful to its ancient traditions. When Nelson was about to go into action, on the eve of Trafalgar, he wrote, on his knees, a prayer: "May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and to Europe in general a great and glorious victory: and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may

humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet." That prayer was answered.

Nelson's prayer was the prayer which all sailors of "polite nations" have been wont to put up, seeking to extend to others that mercy for which they in extremity of circumstances would seek. There is a fellowship of the sea; from that fellowship first Germany and then Austria-Hungary have expelled themselves. They have not only left men-of-war's men to sink under their very eyes, but have murdered, deliberately and in cold blood, hundreds of merchant sailors, unoffending and unarmed, and thousands of peaceful passengers by sea. Defenceless men of many nationalities—Americans—representing all parts of the great continent—Greeks, Swiss, Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Italians, French, Russian and British—have been mercilessly assassinated; gentle women have been condemned to death; little children have been ruthlessly slaughtered. Since the world began to move in its orbit there have been no such massacres on the high seas as those callously planned and executed by the bloodthirsty servants of the two Kaisers.

This is the twentieth century of the Christian

era! From every ocean rises from little children of a dozen or more States—though all children are of the one Kingdom—a cry for the punishment of their murderers, if only that other children may be spared their fate! Can you not hear their appeal? Nevertheless it is being made; and with the childish voices mingle the sobs of hundreds of gentle women and the deeper tones of men, who have been done to death without opportunity of defence, claiming that the vengeance of God, if not the vengeance of man, shall requite these Attilas of the sea. From every crested wave in every sea the same dirge will continue to rise and fill the ears of men, women, and children until such crimes have been punished and expiated in the one and only way. *Explanation! What explanation can there be? Apology! What apology can wipe out all the stains of blood? Reparation! Can German money bring back to life those who have been foully murdered?* The record stands revealed to the civilised world; nothing can efface it. But the spirits of those men, women, and children whose minds have been racked in agony and whose bodies have been foully destroyed call aloud for the punishment of the murderers.

ARCHIBALD HURD.

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Murder at sea